

UNITY

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U N I T Y

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Editorial Comments

NOW that the election is over, the analysts will be having a fine time for several months trying to determine what happened and why. How significant was the religious issue? Was the large Catholic vote for Kennedy a demonstration of religious loyalty or was it the return to the Democratic party by many who strayed into the Eisenhower camp four or eight years ago. Is there any lesson to be learned from the Puerto Rican election where the Bishops dared the people to vote against their wishes and that is just what they did. We are looking forward to the revelations of the interpreters of statistics. At least one fact is clear and that is a man's religion per se does not disqualify or automatically bar him from the Presidency. This is a real gain for democracy.

"Man Heaps" for the poor — segregated skyscrapers, potential vertical slums — this is the final indignity visited upon those large families with low incomes. Public housing is essential but why must it be unimaginative?

Every time we gaze upon a cluster of the massive mountains of family cells, we recall articles we have read and the pictures we

have seen of public and private housing projects in England and in Sweden. Why is American planning so uncreative?

The answer in Chicago at least is money. The Federal Government puts a dollar limit on the average cost per family unit and it is cheaper to pile them on top of each other than to spread them out. It helps to solve the housing shortage which is better than doing nothing but it is not good.

"Man Heaps" contribute nothing to the solution of family welfare problems. In fact they are intensified. There is a real need for cooperation and coordination between housing authorities, school boards, park districts, health departments, public and private welfare agencies. To achieve this will require the kind of political leadership that is genuinely concerned as much with the spiritual and cultural welfare as it is with the physical and economic welfare of the people.

We support the idea that medical care for the aged should be a part of Social Security. However, this is not enough unless everyone is on Social Security. Failing complete coverage some plan must be devised that will assist those who need such help without a pauper's

oath or its equivalent. This will take a bit of doing. Companies that write medical expense and hospital policies are not philanthropists. Their rates are prohibitive for lower income families. Someone should be able to find a formula relating premiums to income, still providing the necessary care and eliminating the disaster potential. Our friends in the A.M.A. and insurance companies should put some of their best brains to work on how to make medical disaster insurance available to the many as well as the few.

Adlai Stevenson in *Look Magazine* reports on his trip to South America and comments on what the United States should do if it is to keep the Latin American nations as friends. Our "good neighbor" policy took very ill in 1953 and for all practical purposes is now dead. It is to be hoped that the new administration in Washington can revive it.

Recently there was a headline in the daily press, "Mexico Takes Over Second Biggest Power Company." The article went on to indicate that this was some sort of communist skulduggery. However, any one who had been reading the Wall Street Journal knew that for months the Mexican government was buying the stock of that company in the open market.

They finally bought the controlling interest.

If you bought controlling interest in a company would you let the minority stockholders operate it for their benefit especially if they were foreigners, English, French, or Mexican?

Of course, there is a distinction between individual buying and the government buying. But in the Latin American countries we are visitors even if we are investors. We have long proclaimed the policy of self-determination. Now we must bring our "good neighbor" policy into line with it.

The leaders in Mexico and other Latin American countries believe that the welfare of their nations is best served by government ownership and control of those industries "affected with the public interest." In the United States we are satisfied with government regulation of these industries. There are free democratic countries (e.g. in Scandinavia and England) which have such ownership and control in varying degrees. It would be far better for us and for them if our Latin American neighbors emulated Sweden, Denmark, or England than the Soviet Union. If this is to be, then we must be their friend and help them achieve their own goals. Their progress and stability would be most advantageous to the United States.

This Decade in Unitarianism

HOMER A. JACK

MY FIRST prediction is that this decade must produce a formula to unite what I will henceforth call high-church and low-church religious liberals. Make no mistake, there are some of each variety in almost every Unitarian church or fellowship! The heated battle between Humanism and Theism has come and happily gone, but a related controversy shows up today in most of our liberal churches. There are those religious liberals—high church—who come to the Sunday morning service primarily to get their spirit renourished. They want beauty and inspiration more than analysis and intellect. There are, in our churches, also those persons—low church—who come to the morning service to receive a challenging intellectual experience. They are often impatient with music, responses, and so-called inspiration.

How to reconcile in one human institution these two temperaments, these two needs? As our denomination becomes bigger, especially as Unitarians and Universalists merge, there will be more scope for specialization, but still the local church and the local minister must meet both needs, and often at the same time. In

theory the head and the heart are not antithetical. Liberal religion is an amalgam of both values: intellectual and emotional. However, in practice—and in a single worship hour—it is hard for the minister to be both high church and low church, hard to please everybody.

I suppose the most a minister or church can do is to inculcate tolerance. The low churchman must be tolerant of the high churchman, and vice versa. The minister must create a service that will be meaningful to all without especially catering to any. This decade will see some creative attention paid to this problem, or else our denominational merger will be accompanied by sub-denominational splits.

How will this merging of high church and low church affect those in the pews? They will be confronted by worship services which will cater both to their aesthetic senses—and their intellect—for they will insist that both factors are necessary for a satisfying service.

I come now to my second prediction. This decade will find religious liberals rethinking the problem of church membership. Today there are virtually no

standards of membership in most liberal churches. In the Unitarian Church of Evanston, Illinois, for example, we rather flaunted the fact that a person could join easily: no preparatory class, no interviews, no approval by the Board of Trustees, no letter of transfer. To be sure, the prospective church member had to be over sixteen years of age and had to contribute \$5.00 a year to vote, but even these provisions were often ignored. Indeed, more than one person in my eleven-year ministry in Evanston joined the church by inadvertently signing the membership book instead of the guest book! When this mistake was belatedly discovered, it was thought best to continue the new relationship, and the erstwhile visitor perhaps found himself a member of the Board of Trustees in no time at all!

The lack of standards of membership makes it quite possible for a member of a Unitarian church today to retain membership in a more conservative church—or half a dozen other churches. Some well-known American Unitarians are thus members simultaneously of two denominations.

I am not suggesting that we religious liberals maintain the severe membership standards of a holiness sect or of some Catholic orders. Surely, however, there could be some meaningful and

minimum standards for membership in a liberal fellowship or church. I shall not suggest just what these standards should be. I frankly do not know except that they are not basically financial. This problem of membership standards is, however, sufficiently pressing that each individual church and perhaps even the denomination as a whole ought study it. I predict a solution will be found early in this first decade of Unitarian and Universalist union. How will this affect those in the pews? They will have a better notion of the prerogatives and prescriptions of membership without limiting individual differences and without hampering individual initiative.

My third prediction is that this decade will find religious liberals devising new machinery for the church to act on social issues *as a church*. In some Unitarian churches in our land, there is currently a heated debate on whether the church itself should engage in social action or limit itself to preparing its members as responsible citizens to engage in social action outside the church. This is not the old debate between individual and social action. For several centuries Protestantism emphasized individual action: "Reform the individual and the world will be reformed." This conviction is still widespread, but

it is no longer held by most Unitarians. We are part of the social gospel movement in America which half a century ago affirmed that groups of individuals—social institutions—must be changed if society is to be changed. The question today is this: Does the individual church, *as a church*, condemn social evil or does it only prepare the individual to act within the context of secular social action groups?

The issue is whether to act within or outside the church. Is there not a way to safeguard the rights of any minority in a liberal church and still allow the church to act if a substantial majority so desires? There are values—traditions—on both sides of this debate. This is an issue which will be debated in our churches far into the decade—and should be, because for all the vaunted liberalism of Unitarians, some of the more traditional churches have machinery for community action when we liberals seem often powerless to act because of our so-called congregational form of church organization.

Again, how will this affect those in the pews? The church or fellowship will take stands on controversial community issues. Members might not always agree with their own church or fellowship and they will have every opportunity to disagree, but the church's

witness will not be paralyzed if there is substantial, preponderant concern on the part of its members.

The fourth prediction is that this decade will see Unitarianism grow from a white church to a world church. Religious liberalism, our brand, began in the West—in Europe and America. There were other liberal circles, to be sure, but most were an outgrowth of the British Empire; religion, even liberal religion, followed the Union Jack to South Africa, Australia, New Zealand. There were—and are—also indigenous groups of religious liberals in India and Japan. By and large, however, we liberals have been Western and white and we have never believed in missionaries. British Unitarianism did have some missionary work in India and American Universalism had some missionary work in Japan. In our own country, the American Unitarian Association has aided in the establishment of fellowships and ultimately churches, a process we call extension but others may call missions. Our home missions have covered the English-speaking Western Hemisphere, from Maine to California, and, recently, from Alaska to Hawaii. Now we must make up our minds if we stop at this point or enter Asia and Africa in earnest, and not just as a Unitarian Service Committee.

My vote is that we Unitarians

deliberately set up fellowships and churches in Bangkok just as we did in Boston, in Durban just as we did in Detroit. We must, of course, be sensitive in spreading our liberalism on a new continent. Yet the opportunity is twofold: we reach persons coming from different cultures and religions, and these same cultures and religions can reach us. Unitarian and Universalist delegates at the Syracuse conferences argued for hours over a statement of purpose for the new, merged denomination. One phrase adopted reads as follows: "To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition. . . ." *Every* tradition? Most of us know little of non-Western traditions. But if we had liberal fellowships and churches in Lucknow or Leopoldville, we could indeed learn to cherish great teachers and teachings and incorporate them into our services and liturgy in Los Angeles or Little Rock. I predict that this decade will greatly expand our department of world churches, not for genial fellowship, but for unambiguous proselytizing—yes, even in Moscow and Peiping.

This will directly affect those in the pews. The minister-at-large might reside in Singapore, not Scarsdale, and the elements of the worship service might be

Islamic, Buddhist, or Hindu, and not be confined as today to the Judeo-Christian tradition.

My fifth and last prediction is that this decade will see much more Unitarian involvement in international affairs. In the time it once took to travel from Beacon Street to Evansville one can travel today from Boston to Benares. The world is literally outside the church window. This year, not this decade, will see the birth of a new department of international peace in the American Unitarian Association, one which surely will survive in the enlarged, merged denomination. With the guidance of this new department, our denomination can determine its peace priorities. This decade will either be the "disarmament decade" or it will be the "suicide decade" for all of humanity. Unitarians *as a group* must be as concerned about disarmament today as Unitarians as individuals have been in the past, from Unitarian layman Grenville Clark who wrote the historic volume on *World Peace through World Law* to Unitarian minister Donald Harrington who has been President of the United World Federalists for several years.

In the decade ahead, Unitarian preoccupation with international affairs will be greater than ever before. We will have better denominational and local church

machinery. We will have better personal experiences, for more religious liberals will travel more miles in more remote places than ever before, travel, that is, only if the prime scourge of our time—war—can be eliminated. I saw a preview screening of the great new movie, "On the Beach." It is depressing, yet it might be prophetic. I do not know if humanity will survive this atomic era, but if we do it will only be because of new determination by all church groups and by new church machinery to prevent mass annihilation.

What will this mean to those in the pews? It will mean peace action through church or fellowship and through denomination for sheer survival.

The decade just ended has been notable to religious liberals because we have grown in numbers of members, we have grown in numbers of fellowships and churches, and we have grown in new and substantial buildings. Also in this past decade we religious liberals have plebiscited ourselves into merger, an accomplishment which was overdue. Also in Unitarianism we have cleaned house, administratively, and have installed a brave, vigorous, and liberal administration. This decade could be the decade

of the statistical breakthrough. From 150,000 religious liberals in our merged denomination, we could easily become half a million—still tiny, but not as tiny as now. But we must never be seduced by numbers. The decade ahead could, however, also provide a programmatic breakthrough. From a high church emphasizing inspiration or a low church emphasizing intellect, we could become an inclusive church seeking to meet the needs of all religious liberals. From an anybody-can-join church we could tighten up our membership requirements. From a liberal-talking denomination we could become a liberal-acting one. From a world-minded denomination we could become a world-wide denomination. From a denomination containing persons interested in international affairs we could become a denomination to be reckoned with in world affairs.

This is a large order. This is more than one minister-at-large or one fellowship can do. But we can make a start. We can start where we are. We can dream great dreams at the beginning of what could be the most promising decade in Unitarianism since the flowering of New England more than a century ago. This is the most promising decade for these dreams to come true.

Life in an Institution without a Personal God

DOROTHY REBENTISCH



LIFE without a personal God is not devoid of goals, ideals, good behavior, and ethics notwithstanding all the words to that effect. And all who dispense with a personal God are not bestial, brutal, corrupt, or slaves of a bad temper. The orthodox seem to fear—consciously or unconsciously, and it in itself has the odor of doubt—that it can only lead to defeatism, nihilism, or atheism and all the connotations that atheism arouses in them. As they would have it, without a personal God there is no happiness, no courage, no patience, no politeness, nor even human decency. Is it little wonder when they do witness one having these virtues—as many Unitarians, Humanists, and even atheists have—that it riles them so? And the better he behaves thereafter, the more frustration and irritation it creates in them, and the more persistent they are to convert him. Can it be that they think what a wonderful “Christian” he would make, taking no account that he would be no better. I speak of Christians as those believing in the divinity of Jesus, a Heaven, a God

of favoritism, and punishment of Hell, of the orthodox Christians; not in the concept of any Liberal.

The world-renowned and Nobel prize winner biochemist, Albert Szent Gyorgyi says: “The brain mostly does not search for truth, but for advantage, and it tries to make us accept as truth what is only interest, mostly short-range interest, allowing our thoughts to be dominated by our desires.” And what is more to our advantage than to be accepted by the majority? What is of more “interest” to a self-seeker than agreeing with the giftbearers? Or more desirous than harmony? Then what is easier than to conform, no matter what one’s personal beliefs? Who among us does not desire the esteem of our companions, fellow patients, or neighbors as the case may be? The task at the present time is to withstand the persecution, the innuendoes, that only a dogma-misled faith has ideals or can conquer undesirable habits or overcome adversities. Many an excessively religious man is a lot more interested in inflicting his will upon you than God’s; and inflating his ego rather than in “saving” your soul. Need I say

that the ill, the malaise, and the handicapped are always the first and usually easy victims. Some of them must be owls to discern any light in their darkness. Little do they realize that when creativity is thwarted by a disability and repressed talents threaten our very life with a lack of interest and a lack of productivity, our chance for happiness is about nil. Only by creativity can and does man differentiate himself from the beasts in the jungle and separate himself from the rest of the animal world. It is for this reason when thwarted in one form, we must seek another form of expression as an outlet for our creativeness.

Is not life itself creative? E. W. Sinnott, in *Matter, Mind and Man*, states:

Does not man thus share in the creativeness of nature, not as a puppet helplessly enmeshed in the rigid certainties of inevitable physical processes but as part of the cosmic creative process itself? And more than this has not man immense possibilities for spiritual growth? Of all creatures man alone has the possibility to glimpse what lies ahead of him. In him life's aspiration has risen past the goals of the body to strive to

reach that spiritual core [creative spirit] from which the universe takes form.

Edward Ericson, in *Faith and Freedom*, writes:

Until man understands the importance of providing himself with his own source of light [and we add happiness], he is condemned to spend his days as a spiritual bulb-snatcher.

Henry Ozer in his latest book writes:

If man but recognizes the tremendous powers of creativeness within himself, then he can carry forward the work of creation and achieve those qualities of humanness which he now only thinks of as divine.

No one has a corner on creativeness as nothing is void of it, much less man. Happiness is never bounded by nor limited to one sect or faith. An innate talent is futile if latent; genius is developed by perseverance. The person creating is happy regardless of his level of mentality. The lower the mentality, the easier satisfied with his work of art. It is far better to strive for the good open to one than to rail at fate for damming up one's *one* talent. No one has, yet depleted and no one can, in one lifetime, deplete his potentialities.

The Square Root of One

J. RAY SHUTE

PERHAPS the appellation, "the Silent Generation," which has been given our contemporary generation of youngsters, is more of a compliment than a criticism. The art of silence is often a rewarding one. Carl Sandburg once told me, when he was my house guest, that a man needs to learn to be alone; to get used to himself; to think in the quiet of solitude. There is merit in this point of view. It was in this vein that Thoreau went to Walden. There is much in introversion and introspection to be applauded. Even the hermit has his point of view, as does the beatnik in his protest. Man should not, of course, become anti-social, although in the kind of society we now have even this aspect of the matter is subject to review and, perhaps, restudy.

We have heard much in the past about "flight from reason," "escape from reality," "lost in the crowd," and such metaphors aimed at a critical reaction to those who find life intolerable and, oftentimes, unbearable. We are forced to take another look at this matter, also. Reason and reality are somewhat more difficult to define than formerly. When unreason becomes a social norm, just

how do we define reason and within what context? Reality, at best, is well-nigh a matter of opinion, due to its abstract qualities. Like truth, goodness, love, beauty, etc., it is no longer possible to think of these intangibles as absolute, since we must relate them to people and things at a given time and under certain conditions, all of which vary.

Events are unique. The experience which attaches to and becomes a part of each event cannot be duplicated. Thus, we can only approximate duplication and, then, the experience which attaches to the approximation makes it unique and, hence, a separate rather than a duplicative event. When values eventuate into our lives, they have their unique experiences related thereto and cannot be duplicated. In this sense, life is a series of unique events and experiences, not unrelated necessarily, but interrelated and maintaining a separateness and uniqueness.

Each human being is unique and cannot be duplicated, physically or behaviorally. This fact gives the lie to propaganda and indoctrination as means of destroying individualism and making each man a carbon copy of the

"model" man. Man is subject to coercion and manipulation and can be forced into a strait jacket of conformity, but his personality remains unique and can only be destroyed with death; it cannot be duplicated. This is not to say that totalitarian and absolutist institutions and organizations do not strive to reduce all to a common denominator and, then, attempt the absorption of the components into the denominator. But, it cannot be achieved in toto—it can only be approximated under coercion and manipulation. Even slavery has its conditions of equality and fraternity, its own concepts of liberty.

The problem confronting modern man is how to live a life of meaning and significance within a society in which all methods of organization—social, political, religious, and economic—are totalitarian in nature. If freedom is the right to choose, then there is precious little freedom left anywhere for anybody. In areas where basic choices are made, these choices are not available to man; the choices are made for him.

War and peace have become the abnormal in our time and the cold war the normal. We do not raise our children in the knowledge of peace—how can we?—but only in the realization of the absence of war. This appears to be the best we can hope for and it is a deal

better than war, but a far cry from peace. Withal, the current situational impasse has its perverted values. It is the only mechanism which provides a checkmate to war. However, we dare not be naïve. It is not in the realm of the tenable to assume that impulsive men who sit in places of authority can forever contain their frustration without one day reaching the end of their tolerance or deciding that the "enemy" is sufficiently relaxed to be annihilated. It is a matter of time, human frailty, or the real chance of accidental fuse-lighting.

In such a life-situation as we live from day to day, we must employ the philosophy of "as-if." Daily we must live as if we were normal personalities living in a normal world. However, we must constantly keep alert and aware of our *real* status and that of the world. Otherwise, we should become fatalists. Since most of the people of the world never know what is actually going on, but only what their governments want them to know, most of us really are living as if we were really living!

In the context of the prevailing dilemma of the world, it is difficult for the sensitive, ethical individual to prevent his life from becoming a farce—an idiot's tale. Confronted with the necessity of earning a living, most people are

in a conformist situation which makes ever-increasing demands upon the employee to remember his obligation to the employer and not to discredit the firm in any way, at any time. Some firms suggest that this rule should apply, likewise, to the employee's family. It is a sort of economic "guilt by association" arrangement. This type of insistence on "proper" behavior, conservatism, and all that goes with such a distorted concept of labor relations, is stultifying. We also remember the civil servant and the numbers racket not too long ago. Under such conditions of employment, it is difficult to maintain one's dignity, loyalty, and sense of freedom.

There was a time when the difference was marked between the individual and his relation to society and the citizen and his relation to the state. Not so today when the state is supreme and brooks no division of loyalty. No longer do we debate if man owes a greater loyalty to humanity than to the state. Apply this to atomic testing, or to war, and we begin to see to what extent all governments are totalitarian. Likewise, we understand more clearly the limit of religious expression and social action. In our day these have become extensions of the state, wall of separation between church and state to the contrary notwithstanding. Thus, the eth-

ical man is expected to be the good citizen, who says: "My country, right or wrong." This renders the church a cult of symbolism. It also leads the ethical man into frustration, with the added possibilities of becoming a fatalist or a callous, helpless, and hopeless mortal. Those who can survive the ordeal and maintain a working set of values, even while experiencing a feeling of alienation, may find their way into a pseudo-society within the broader society. Through such identification they are at least able to experience a theoretical liberalism which employs the ethical terminology, even as it is unable to put it into practical and broad use.

We return, then, to our original suggestion of the value of aloneness. Ours is a day for the realist, not the idealist. For the tough and not the tender-hearted. Yet, the hopes, dreams, and aspirations for the beloved community must survive against that day when climatic changes will afford possibilities for new directions. To cherish this hope, one can find the warmest response, the best reception, and the most appreciative audience alone. In the meantime, may we offer an admonition which may be appropriate. This pseudo-Latin motto is: *Illegitimi non carborundum*, which in the vernacular means: "Don't let the bastards wear you down."

"Lead Us Not into Penn Station!"

JOHN M. MORRIS

SOME time ago, when I was serving a church in another city, the mother of a six-year-old called me to tell me that her little girl was terribly frightened. After some questioning the mother had learned that a neighbor's child had told her that she was going to "fry in Hell" when she died and had added some lurid descriptions of the flames. The thought was too awful for her to comprehend, particularly when it was complicated by the memory of the recent death of a grandmother. Although she could not put it into words, the vision of such a destiny had left this little girl's world shaken and crumbled.

A few weeks later, when I could not understand why one particularly bright and alert boy had such trouble in getting along with the other children in his church school class, his mother told me a story that helped to illustrate and partially to explain his actions. When he was in kindergarten, on his first day in class, the teacher had begun a little prayer to God. He refused to bow his head. She instructed him to do so, and he explained, "But I don't believe in God." There was a silence through all the class. The teacher then began a tirade against him that

was to let him know that everyone *must* believe in God. The children could not, of course, understand the logic of their teacher's argument, but they could understand that there was something monstrously wrong with their new playmate; that he was somehow wicked in a way that they could not comprehend, but they must stay away from him. And he will carry the sense of aloneness that he first experienced in that kindergarten class through the rest of his life.

What happened to this boy was happening to hundreds of other children and teenagers in that city under a program of so-called "moral and spiritual values" in the public schools. The problem was compounded through increasingly frequent contacts with children of other religious viewpoints. With the increase in church membership during the past twenty years—an increase from 49 per cent of the population in 1940 to more than 60 per cent today—has come an increased competition among churches for members and an increased pressure upon the few remaining unorthodox to conform.

This pressure is not confined to children. Some time ago, for in-

stance, the President of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., announced to the ministerial association that he had fired a science teacher who admitted that he was an atheist. "No one can be a good scientist and an atheist at the same time," he told the ministers. We need not dwell on the fact that this college president's claim was simply false—to take just two examples, Pierre and Marie Curie were both atheists and first-rate scientists—yet it illustrates the kind of forces that a sincere skeptic runs into today. It would have been much easier for the college professor to have *claimed* a belief in God, to have been, in other words, a hypocrite. It would not have been the first time that Christian society has made a virtue of hypocrisy.

The pressures toward an outward religious conformity have had particularly destructive effects upon the children between four and seven years old who do not form abstract ideas which correspond to adult concepts of God, Heaven, angels, Hell, immortality, and so on, but whose vocabulary is advanced enough to permit them to say the words.

The attempt to force children to mouth words that they cannot understand sometimes leads to ludicrous results. Teachers in the school system at Red Bank, N. J., were reported to have complained

that the younger children were garbling the words to the Lord's Prayer when they were ordered to repeat it in assemblies. They used such phrases as these: "... Harold be thy name," "... Give us this day our jelly bread," "... Lead us not into Penn Station."

In each case the child has substituted something concrete for something abstract: "Harold" for "hallowed," "jelly" for "daily," "Penn Station," something that these New Jersey youngsters had often seen, for "temptation," a highly abstract adult word.

It is typical of the spirit of our times that instead of removing this unintelligible recitation from the assemblies, the superintendent of schools instructed each of the teachers to have the children memorize the correct words. Now the little girl will no longer pray to be spared the real ordeal of entering the vast, echoing caverns of Pennsylvania Station, but will repeat the meaningless word that she is taught.

We Unitarians, during the years since 1937, when we began to rethink and rebuild our church school curriculum, have maintained that children ought to be taught in terms of their own understanding. Important concepts, like God, immortality, and so on, are not to be introduced to three-year-olds, who cannot think abstractly. At this age, "God" can

mean only an invisible man or ghost, a concept that the child will have to reject in later years. Instead, we work with experiences that do have deep, emotional significance to the youngest children, experiences of fear, joy, wonder, and discovery. We have felt that historical materials, like those in the Bible, should come only when children are able to conceptualize distance in time and space, surely not before eight years old. Other important concepts, such as tolerance and understanding for people of other lands and religions, come later, when young people are in their teens. We have tried to match our teaching to the exquisitely delicate and gradual unfolding of the child's mind.

But we have been forced by pressures within our society today to recognize that other religions do not wait. Others are far too eager to force our three- and four-year-olds into the categories of their faith, long before they can have any notion of what their churches really mean.

One book, published a few years ago, gives our tentative answer to these pressures upon children. It is Edith Fisher Hunter's *The Questioning Child and Religion*.

Mrs. Hunter documents the appalling record of children hurt, confused, and upset by their contacts with persons of other religions. Attempts to think in cate-

gories of which their minds are incapable have produced only a grotesque mockery of religion in children.

"What is the idea of God that gets through to the majority of children trained in traditional Sunday schools?" she asks. "It is mostly a watered-down version of the old theology. In spite of learned theological controversies among top theological thinkers of various faiths, the traditional idea of God that sifts through to children tends to be simple, uniform, and self-contradictory.

"God is a person, a man, without a body. He cannot be seen or touched, and yet He can be talked to. This is called praying. You can ask Him for things, and yet you are not supposed to exactly. If you are good, you may get what you ask for, and then again you may not. He knows what is best for you. He lives in Heaven. That is where dead people are with God. Jesus is there, too, only he is not dead. God is also everywhere, but especially in churches, and at the same time He is in everyone. He was also Jesus. God wants people, especially children, to be good, and He punishes bad people, and yet He forgives them. He can see and hear everything and keeps track of everything you do. He plans for everything. God made everything and makes the rain come now and makes things

grow. We are not to blame Him for hurricanes and accidents and prayers that do not get answered—we just do not know all about God yet. God likes to have people thank Him a lot.”

This would be funny if it were not so sad. It was partly to save our children from this confused imitation of a religion that we developed our curriculum in the first place. Now we are finding that our children with increasing frequency and force are being told that they do not have a religion unless they accept something like this confusing set of beliefs.

There are two responses that we might make to this pressure. One would be to give in to it, in the hope that the children might some day outgrow this naïve, self-contradictory set of beliefs. To do this would mean to relinquish our role as parents, because it would mean permitting children's miseducation. Another response might be to withdraw children from contacts with all but a select group. But we are not the kind of people who would withdraw to a separate and isolated community of our own, and we feel it important to know and to understand people who may differ from us. Thus we will find that our children do come into contact with outside, divergent pressures. Is there any way to help our children meet these pres-

ures? Or, to make the question somewhat more inclusive, how can any sincere and thinking person, holding to a religion based upon freedom, reason, and tolerance, meet the challenge that comes from forces that would draw him down toward something less?

We are seeking, in brief, a creative way of dealing with human ideological conflicts, on the level of the adult as well as on that of children.

We must in the beginning admit that there are some questions that cannot be answered within the experience of the person that asks them. There is the story of the three-year-old whose mother told him that she got Daddy a new necktie for Christmas, and that it was a secret. But he ran to Daddy and told him that she had a *secret* necktie for him for Christmas. He just could not grasp the meanings that are hidden in the adult word “secret.”

In the same way, it seems to me, we must recognize that my experiences are different from those of my Catholic neighbor, my non-church neighbor, my Congregational neighbor, even my Unitarian neighbor—and that there must always be some residue of misunderstanding between us. Certain things make sense to me that could not possibly make sense to one of them until he has had a comparable experience. Certain

things make sense to an adult which do not make sense to a child.

Admitting these times of misunderstanding, we may go on to suggest certain underlying themes in our attempts to answer children's questions.

First, we must try to discover what the other person, child or adult, is actually talking about. We may say, "That is a good question. Could you tell me a little bit more about it?"

How many times have we plunged into our answers and assertions without the attempt to discover what meaning a question or a comment has to the person who ventured it! We have all seen the man who was ready with his answer before we had time to ask our question—leaving us only with the feeling, "That is not what I meant, that is not what I meant at all."

Second, we must separate what can be determined by inquiry and observation, and what cannot be determined by these processes. That is, we must separate reliable knowledge from that which must by its very nature be speculation and intuition.

We liberals tend to leave ourselves vulnerable in the eyes of our children by appearing to know less about religious matters than do our more dogmatic neighbors. Here is how one mother

tried to give a more adequate response to her six-year-old Freddy, who had inquired about the nature of Heaven:

"Freddy, let me ask *you* something. What happens when a person dies?"

"Well, his heart stops beating and his body stops working. Grandpa's did."

"What happens to his talking?"

"That stops, too," said the little boy.

"Can a person who has died tell us whether he has gone to Heaven?"

"No," said Freddy.

"Can anyone tell us what happens after we die?"

"Of course not."

"Then we just do not know," said his mother. "Some people like to think there is a lovely place called Heaven that we go to, but no one really knows."

Mrs. Hunter comments: "By handling Freddy's question in this way his mother helped him to see the basis on which she felt an answer to this kind of question might be arrived at. Freddy saw that his mother was not less informed than [his friend] Tommy, but that she felt this kind of question just cannot have any more definite answer."

Yet in bringing thoughtful answers to children's questions about Heaven, God, Jesus, devils, and so

forth, we are only rendering first aid for the hurts that have been inflicted by their acquaintances. There is no point even in bringing these subjects up with young children unless they ask.

Such ideas are inevitably outside the realm of a child's thought and experience. When they reach about seven years old, as Gesell and Ilg point out, in many of them "there are beginnings of slight scepticism about Santa Claus, about religion and other matters of which [they] have been told but which [they have] not experienced at first hand." Gesell's observation certainly applies to the kind of "religion" that our society seems to be trying to impress upon us and our children—something which is decidedly not "first hand."

It will be up to us to decide what kind of religion we want them—and ourselves—to have. The pressure of our society is strong and the rewards for conformity are real. Certainly there will be some sincere liberals that would prefer to acquiesce in allowing their children to acquire a religion that places God and Santa Claus and Superman on about the same level and which must be rejected when and if the child is observant and sensitive enough to think for himself.

Or we can develop for our children and for ourselves a religion

that is *not* that of which one is merely told, but which is of those realities experienced at first hand. For the youngest children it will be patiently watching the growth of a seed under blotters that parent or teacher has prepared; participating in the struggle of a butterfly to free itself from the faded chrysalis; conducting the sad and reverent burial of a dead bird and speculating about the nature of the invisible life that has left it; helping to dry dishes or to mop the floor; in a spirit in family and school that demonstrates far better than any memorized Bible texts the way of living with other people. In these and a thousand other ways religion will become that for which no words, no theology, can be a substitute. It will be a religion of life.

Children are under pressure from the community to conform to the popular definition of religion. They will need from their parents a firm decision whether to accept or in some creative fashion to reject the stories of angels and a supernatural, wonder-working Jesus. Perhaps the final answer to the problem of conflict with other religions in a community is this: the development of a religious life so rich and meaningful that anything else seems irrelevant by contrast. I know that we often fall short of this goal. I have seen liberal churches in which the ma-

for attraction seems to be the right to malign other religious faiths, and we have sometimes been called negativistic with justification. What is even worse, I have seen liberal churches which have failed to recognize their uniqueness, and have concerned themselves with imitating other churches in an effort to be "non-controversial." And yet when I see the warmth and beauty to which our liberal religion can sometimes reach, I know that it is worth the failures.

In the unavoidable conflict with other religions, a conflict which we would very willingly avoid, I am glad that there have been so many children, youth, and adults who have held out against the waves of pressure toward conformity that come from their neighbors. These forces are strong and younger children need all the help we can give them in resisting them. But I believe, and know that you believe, that our faith is worth saving.



A Covenant

"As those who believe in religion,

As those who believe in Freedom, Fellowship
and Character in Religion,

As those who believe that the religious
life means the thankful, trustful,
loyal and helpful life,

And as those who believe that a church is
a brotherhood of helpers, wherein
it is made easier to live such a life,

We join ourselves together, name, hand
and heart."

William Channing Gannett, 1879.

Teizo

JAMES CLARK MOLONEY

HE might even have been seven years of age. Stooped to his haunches, he wiped, with a wet cloth, the face of the unconscious woman who was curled up on a mat on the floor. The boy, Teizo, there all day and throughout the night, tenderly administered to the woman's needs.

No one needed to tell me that the woman was his mother. That's a knowledge that a man knows from the inside. But as a doctor, I knew the woman was dying from pulmonary tuberculosis.

She was on the floor, because she was in the impoverished hospital at Taira, Okinawa Shima. The Sixth Marines of World War II had just passed through the area . . . the sick, the maimed, the wounded civilians were herded to the vacant school building that was now a hospital.

Teizo never neglected his vigil. On his haunches within inches of his dying mother, he catnapped;

awakening, he'd tend the mother, wiping her face, straightening out the blanket, giving her water to drink, caressing her brow. But the mother couldn't eat, and involuntarily she soiled herself. Teizo cleansed and washed her. He changed her gown. Teizo was unperturbed. His patience was inexhaustible. No mother was better mothered. No one had a more devoted nurse.

One morning Teizo was not at his customary station. He sat leaning his weary back against the wall. He was not tense. There was not a tear in his eye. I asked him: "Teizo, why are you not with your mother?"

"My mother has no further need of me." I looked under the blanket. Teizo was right. His mother was dead. I returned to the boy's side. "But Teizo, why are you not crying?" He answered, "If I had neglected her when she lived, I would now have reason to cry."

Some Future Articles of Interest

- "Man Makes His Future" Victor James
"Honoring the Unorthodox" Ira D. Cardiff
"The Peril and Promise of the Liberal
Religious Outlook on World Affairs" Inis L. Claude, Jr.

Thomas Paine and Unitarianism

WALLACE RUSTERHOLTZ

WE might expect two distinguished Revolutionary patriots and Unitarians, John Adams and Thomas Paine, to be friends. Adams was a member of a Unitarian church, and Paine was completely Unitarian in his views, like their mutual friend Thomas Jefferson, but never joined a church. However, Adams was bitterly hostile to Paine, as he was for some years to Jefferson, but for a different reason.

Adams attacked Paine as if he were the enemy of mankind when he wrote to a friend in 1805:

I know not whether any man in the world has had more influence on its inhabitants or affairs for the last thirty years than Tom Paine. There can be no severer satire on the age. For such a mongrel between pig and puppy, begotten by a wild boar on a bitch wolf, never before in any age of the world was suffered by the poltroonery of mankind to run through such a career of mischief. Call it then the age of Paine. He deserves it much more than the courtesan who was consecrated to represent the goddess [of reason] in the temple in Paris, and whose name Tom has given to

the age.

How could there be such animosity, as Adams felt for Paine, between two men who seem to have so much in common? The answer to this question will tell us something about both Paine and Unitarianism which I believe is important for us to know.

Adams, though born into a poor family in a village in Massachusetts, was a Harvard graduate, an important Boston lawyer, and second President of the United States. He was a conservative after the Revolution, and rather a snob. Paine was an immigrant with little formal education, and a Jeffersonian Democrat. But these differences only partly account for Adams' dislike of Paine.

Paine was born in England in 1737. After brief schooling cut short by poverty, he tried his father's trade of corset-making. Later he became a tax collector, but was twice dismissed for what has been called unionizing activity. He was already something of a rebel. He met Benjamin Franklin in London, and acted on Franklin's suggestion that he go to America.

He arrived in Philadelphia in 1774 with letters of introduction from Franklin. He took up jour-

nalism, publicly advocated the abolition of slavery, became a charter member (maybe a founder) of possibly the first anti-slavery society, and was perhaps the first publicly to propose American independence. He helped to inspire the colonies to revolt by writing his brilliant pamphlet, *Common Sense*, of which 120,000 copies were quickly sold. Even Adams admitted that this "crystallized public opinion, and was the first factor in bringing about the Revolution." Paine resigned the editorship of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, served in the ranks as a soldier, and began to write his famous series of pamphlets entitled *The Crisis*. These did much to build the morale of the American public during the many dark days and years of the Revolution. Washington is said to have ordered some of them read to the army during the terrible winter at Valley Forge. Washington later thanked Paine for his services to his adopted country. Paine was indeed an important American Patriot!

But he was not content with that. He hoped for a revolution in England, and went there in 1787. When the French Revolution started, he defended it in England by writing his noted book, *The Rights of Man*, in reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

He was indicted for sedition, and fled to France where he was immediately elected to the Convention. But he opposed the violence and extremism of the Jacobins and was imprisoned.

While in prison, he took the opportunity to write his famous book, *The Age of Reason*, for the purpose of deterring the French Revolutionists from atheism. He tried to present a rational and humane alternative to orthodoxy. Yet this book was burned in England where he was tried in his absence for blasphemy, and it was denounced in America and elsewhere. Later he returned to America at the invitation of President Jefferson. But he was reviled before and after his death in 1809 in his adopted country. Paine was a living martyr, even in America, for his political and religious liberalism.

Why did Paine's *Age of Reason* create such antagonism in Adams and many others? To us, now, it is mild Unitarianism. But it is very plain-spoken, simple, and direct, with some crudities, and was aimed at the man in the street. According to G. Adolph Koch in his interesting book, *Republican Religion*, the difference between New England Congregational Unitarians like Adams and reformers like Paine was "primarily the social difference between liberalism and radicalism. Roughly

they agreed in theory. . . . [But] it is one thing to discuss deism and political philosophy in the drawing room," as Adams did, and another to "incite the masses to forget their place in the social body." Paine really believed in man, even the common man, and wanted to liberate him spiritually as well as politically. Adams was not ready for this.

But I see a much bigger difference between Unitarians like Adams and Paine. This was clarified for me recently by Dr. Charles H. Lyttle, Professor Emeritus of Meadville Theological School at the University of Chicago. Adams was nurtured in New England Congregationalism and consequently steeped in what we call the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Bible, to Adams, was still the infallible word of God—if interpreted correctly. Jesus was the son of God in the sense of being closer to God than the rest of us. He was our savior in the sense of being a mediator between God and man.

To Paine, on the other hand, Jesus was not a son of God any more than anyone else is. He considered neither Jesus nor his teachings to be perfect. He criticized Jesus' precepts to turn the other cheek and love our enemies, although he sometimes considered himself a Quaker. He wrote in *The Age of Reason* that "the doc-

trine of not retaliating injuries is much better expressed in [the Old Testament Book of] Proverbs. . . . It is there said . . . 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.'" He believed that when meekness is carried to the extreme advocated by Jesus "it is assassinating the dignity of forbearance and sinking man into a spaniel. . . . To love in proportion to the injury, if it could be done, would be to offer a premium for a crime."

As for the Bible, which Adams considered infallible, Paine declared, "I can write a better book myself." He considered parts of it inhuman. He called it the word of a demon instead of God when Jehovah sanctioned the slaughter of women and children whose only offense was that they already lived in the land which the Jews wanted for themselves. (Compare modern Israel and its treatment of the Arabs of Palestine.) Paine's heart as well as his head revolted against such religion. He was not a cold intellectual like Adams. He felt rationalism as well as reasoned it.

To Paine, the true word of God or Bible is the whole creation, the universe; and science is the true theology. "The Bible of the creation is inexhaustible in texts," he wrote. "Every part of science, whether connected with the geography of the universe, with the

systems of animal and vegetable life, or with the properties of inanimate matter, is a text as well for devotion as for philosophy—for gratitude as for human improvement."

Such doctrines place Paine in the humanistic and rationalistic tradition of knowledge, reason, and human (not divine) concerns of the ancient classical period, the Renaissance, and the eighteenth century. He is not in the Judeo-Christian tradition of New England Congregationalism and John Adams.

From quotations which I have given, I hope that you can see that Paine's *Age of Reason* was a remarkable book which still is impressive. Although crude in spots, it is an acute and deeply felt critique of the Bible and of Christian orthodoxy. Sir Leslie Stephen, author of the standard *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, wrote that Paine "anticipated a good many criticisms, obvious enough when once stated, but requiring no little independence and directness of thought in the unguided investigator. So, for example, he remarks [in his "Reply to the Bishop of Llandaff" and "Letter to Mr. Erskine"] upon the inconsistency between the two narratives of the creation, and points out that in one narrative . . . the phrase 'Lord God' is substituted

for God in the other. He has noted, therefore, the distinction made by later criticism between the Jehovist and the Elohist." Paine was something of a scholar, though without much formal education.

His rational and humane thinking led him to believe in complete religious freedom and in the value of all great religions. "My own mind is my church," he wrote, but he did not claim originality. He declared that "if ever a universal religion should prevail, it will not be by believing anything new, but in getting rid of redundancies." He summed up his creed thus:

Those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavoring to make their fellow mortals happy, for this is the only way that we can serve God, will be happy hereafter: and . . . the very wicked will meet with some punishment. This is my opinion. It is consistent with my idea of God's justice, and with the reason that God has given me.

His ultimate simplification of his philosophy and religion is familiar to us, but it bears repetition as an ideal which most of us have not even yet reached: "The world is my country; to do good is my religion."

Not only Adams but much later

New England Unitarians, including even Theodore Parker, disliked Paine. Parker wrote in 1843 that "with what I understand to be the spirit of his writings on theology and religion, I have not the smallest sympathy." Yet he repeated Paine almost word for word when he wrote that there is "but one religion, . . . being good and doing good." He followed Paine's plea to "get rid of redundancies" when he preached his great sermon on "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," declaring that the permanent is "a simple thing. . . . It is absolute, pure morality; absolute, pure religion; the love of man; the love of God acting without let or hindrance." Paine had written much the same a half-century earlier.

For Adams, Parker, and even later New England Unitarians

steeped in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Paine's Unitarianism is not sufficiently Biblical and theological. But today we should recognize that he helped to bring to America the humanistic tradition of classical Greece and Rome, the Renaissance, and his own enlightened eighteenth century. This humanistic tradition seems to many of us to offer as much to modern Unitarianism as the Judeo-Christian tradition. Like some of the Renaissance humanists in particular, Paine combined scholarship, reason, feeling, and imagination to attain a broad and enlightened view of life. But he went beyond them to achieve a liberal modern religion which, if not original, was indeed his own in both theory and practice. We owe him a debt of gratitude for helping to enlarge our religious heritage.



The Rights of Man

The superstitious awe, the enslaving reverence, that formerly surrounded affluence, is passing away in all countries, and leaving the possessor of property to the convulsion of accidents. When wealth and splendor, instead of fascinating the multitude, excite emotions of disgust; when, instead of drawing forth admiration, it is beheld as an insult upon wretchedness; when the ostentatious appearance it makes serves to call the right of it in question, the case of property becomes critical, and it is only in a system of justice that the possessor can contemplate security.

Thomas Paine.

Western Unitarian Conference

5711 Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois

ELLSWORTH M. SMITH, *Executive Secretary*

Roving Reporter

October 31st we mailed 12,270 copies of "The Midcontinental Messenger" which is the newsletter of the Western Unitarian Conference and the Midwest Universalist Conference. The task was an immense one. James Saul and Ted Wheeler, as editor and layout artist, did a great team job. Helen Ketterer made nearly eight thousand Elliott address stencils. Everybody in the office pitched in at times when the going got tough. Don Thompson and Don King helped in very special ways—Don King having been the addresser and mailer of the Universalist Messenger, the only person who really knew the ropes about getting our huge mailing in proper shape for the postal authorities. If you do not get a copy it is because we do not have your address. Write and ask to be put on the mailing list. The next issue will contain pictures of the hard-driven work crew in the mailing room at 5711 Woodlawn.

Seven of our eight Area Councils have had annual meetings in the last few weeks. Each has demonstrated progress over a year ago. In some, committees-on-paper are becoming fully manned and programs are becoming year-round operational realities. The Rocky Mountain Area Council, following Ohio Valley's lead, established the position of Executive Director and is seeking the man to fill the

job. It is a fair estimate that in the next few years there will be part-time, then full-time staff in several Area Councils, which will then be small "regions."

The Estes Park Summer Assembly has been planned for next summer—the dates, August 27-31, inclusive. In another week the Lake Geneva Summer Assembly will be planned—July 2-8, inclusive. The 1961 Annual Meetings of the Western Unitarian Conference and the Midwest Universalist Conference will be held in Chicago, at the Pick-Congress Hotel, April 6-9, inclusive. There may be, if all plans carry, a worship service at Rockefeller Chapel on April 9th. It is expected that this meeting will see the completion of merger of the two Conferences and a vote to request affiliation with the new Unitarian Universalist Association as an official "Region," at May Meetings, May 10-15, inclusive.

Plans for the North Star Summer Assembly at Star Island, Minnesota, are firming up. They involve the use of the new camp property in Cass Lake given to the Midwest Universalists and to be operated jointly by our two Conferences. The camp will accommodate, without enlarging the facilities, about sixty people. It is likely that the last week in June will be reserved for ministers and their families, on a work-camp

basis. Then three weeks in July for a work camp for high school and/or college young men. Then a Junior High week, an R E week, a Fellowships week, and a Women's week. Gene Sparrow, our new staff worker, who has had eighteen summers of camp experience, will be in charge, and committees galore will be working out details, including some initial financing. If you have ideas or want to help, write the office in care of Mr. Sparrow.

November 1st I phoned Jim Saul, our newsletter editor, about an evening to talk over long-range editorial policy and had to say that Friday, November 4th, would be the last evening I could meet with him or anyone until November 23d, here in Chicago.

We are working out with President Malcolm Sutherland of Meadville and a committee of students a three-way program for field work experience for qualified students. Fellowships and churches within any reasonable distance from Chicago may write the School or our office to inquire about having a theological student as a guest speaker or preacher, or to meet with a youth group, or whatever. The School and the Conference staff will share with the students in evaluating their experiences to achieve the greatest learning value.

The Ann Arbor pulpit committee, seeking a new minister to recommend to the congregation, has a sizable task. The Department of the Ministry and our office are recommending seven or eight men, another ten men have asked to be considered, and members of the congregation have sug-

gested to the committee the names of thirty-five others! Pulpit committees are also at work at Sioux City (Carl Whittier went east to the Cohasset church last Spring), Lincoln (Peter Raible is going to Seattle), and Des Moines (Harold Buck will be a professional fund raiser on the Appeal staff).

A couple of letters from Munroe Husbands today announced that he had "entered" the Western Conference and had met with three groups in upper Michigan, and asked would I go visit them in the next two or three weeks. Meanwhile, due to wonderful teamwork between our Dorothy Grant of Cedar Falls, and Munroe Husbands, Iowa has more than twice as many fellowships as last year. And these should be visited, too!

Three delightful stories. The Davenport Church borrowed a chunk of money from the Iowa Unitarian Association and paid it back in about two years instead of ten! The fellowship at Lawrence, Kansas, wants to do \$29,000 worth of building to the country school they now own, and have \$31,000 already pledged! The Grand Rapids, Minnesota, fellowship has a bit of acreage worth \$3,000, plans for a lovely small building which will cost \$9,000 in cash outlay, plus a lot of hard physical work. They have \$7,000 in sight in pledges and want to borrow \$3,000 so they can finish the job and furnish the building. The fellowship consists of eight couples!

Last Sunday night I participated in the Installation of Edward Redman at Arlington, Virginia. He will continue through

this final year of his term on our Board of Directors and as Chairman of our Program Planning Committee. And Annette will be, again this year, the Registrar for Lake Geneva. Last night Ed was to meet with the Greater Washington group of ministers and laymen to talk about regionalism as he knows it in the Western Conference.

In the Omaha Church there is a man who is incapacitated from the waist down and who uses a wheel chair. His wife is blind. He is her eyes and she is his legs. Together, as a couple and childless, they teach a church school class!

At Denver recently, we met a delightful young couple who are new in Greeley, Colorado—just where we have been wanting to start a fellowship for some years. So we latched on to them. But Mr. and Mrs. Bill Quan begged us: "Lay off a while, will you—we just got through seeing a fellowship through its birth pangs somewhere else and we're tired!" We will give them until next March. Then, our Conference Committee on Fellowships will meet in Colorado and the whole committee will go to Greeley and start the fellowship, and let the Quans hold the bag!

The above-mentioned Lawrence fellowship meets in a school three miles outside the city limits. Someone said to one of the members: "What's the matter with you Unitarians that they won't let you meet inside the city limits?"

Recently we were at Star Island and had hoped Tom Smith, our minister at Duluth and Virginia, Minnesota, would join us. His

wife Camille, in Duluth, phoned him in Virginia to remind him. With seventy cents in his pocket Tom hitchhiked to Cass Lake, found us, and pitched in the seventeen cents he had left toward dinner.

With Unitarians and Universalists, all you have to do is announce a need and people come running to help!

At the same time, we are a people of difficult opposites. So many of us are so loyal and enthusiastic, but because we were "burned" by one or more of the folkways of orthodoxy, we rebel against some of the very things we need most to develop in order to be a solid movement. How frequently have you heard that our fellowships people are anti-clerical (meaning anti-minister)! Well, they are not really—they are still rebelling against the only ministers they have ever really known, orthodox men who pounded the Bible and the gavel too hard. But the end result is they do not think they ever want a minister "over them" again. This problem should be easily solved—they should get to know a bunch of our ministers and learn that they are an entirely different species. As someone said recently, not altogether flatteringly: "With us, you can't tell the ministers from the kids!" Not an authoritarian in a carload.

Then, though (as I believe) our people are more honestly religious in all their ways than many orthodox groups I have known, they rebel against such religious categories as "church," "worship," "prayer," and "responsive reading." It is true that most of the

people who joined First Church in Cincinnati while I was its minister made articulate these objections. Again, these are people in rebellion against the emotional impact of past experiences, but who have joined us "for cause."

Further, though our people usually support their own local societies with a right good will and are most generous in all sorts of ways with time and money for all good community causes, they shrink away from generous giving to the denominational enterprise. Are they anti-organization? Maybe. Certainly they enjoy and trust the local organization, but this they can watch and control. They are perhaps traumatized about *any* overhead organization. They are not disloyal, but they resist being drawn into the cogs of what they conceive, unrealistically, to be a denominational machine. The cure? Get them to Lake Geneva or Estes or to May Meetings! But we cannot get them all, and meanwhile 75 per cent of Unitarians in the Western Conference have had only a single local experience. Further, they are a remarkably self-reliant people who have some time ago adjusted to the proposition that they could go through their lives without any dependence on any kind of organized religion and have joined us—again—"for cause," but not because of dependency needs.

So, we have the tantalizing situation of being infiltrated and "loaded" with most wonderful people with great leadership potential, who are gun-shy and wary of anything overhead that may just possibly resemble the unhappy pressures that drove them

out of orthodoxy. That is why I love them, but, in another vein, it is enough to drive a Regional Director mad!

The problem is ours—we Unitarian and Universalist "organization men." It is up to us to inform so clearly and so honestly and with so total an absence of propagandistic devices that these wonderful rebels of ours will relax their self-protective vigilance and "join the movement."

Look at us! We are the fastest growing denomination in America today. Our growth (in the Western Conference) has been 9 per cent net each year for the last three years at least, while the average of Protestant growth in the nation has been 1.7 per cent (which is less than the population growth). Yet, with all our efforts at communication we have only a \$4.50 per member average contribution to the movement against a strictly comparable figure for Protestant denominations of \$17 per year. And we have to undergird a tremendous growth operation, explosive in its nature, while the major denominations are maintaining well-developed and smoothly running "holding" operations. I do not know how to lick this situation, do you? If you have an idea, share it with me—you will still have it but I will have it, too—this is called sharing the wealth.

Consider the new Chairman of the Religious Education Committee for the two Conferences. Name: Polly Ely, of Cedar Rapids, who is the wife of John Ely, Jr., who is running for the state legislature and she is sharing his cam-